श्री रामदेव भंडारी: पूरे सेशन में मुझे एक भी सप्लीमेंट्री पूछने का मौका नहीं मिला है ....(व्यवधान)

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Already 25 minutes have been spent on the question.

Question No. 422. Mr. Vayalar Ravi.

Growth of Fisheries Wealth

*422. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pelased to state:

(a) whether large scale fishing by big trawlers has affected the growth of fisheries wealth;

(b) whether it is a fact that growth of fisheries wealth is in negative; and

(c) the steps taken to preserve the fisheries wealth in our oceans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOM PAL): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the table of the house.

Statement

(a) and (b) The marine fish production in the country has steadily increased from 16.58 lakh tonnes in 1987-88 to 29.67 lakh tonnes in 1996-97. The operation of deep sea trawlers/vessels has helped to increase the marine fish production by harvesting of relatively unexploited resources beyond the territorial waters.

(c) The Government is implementing the following schemes/programmes for the development of marine fishery resources:

(i) Enforcement of the Maritime Zones of India (Regulation of Fishing by Foreign Vessels) Act, 1981 and rules thereunder to check poaching and unauthorised fishing by foreign fishing vessels in Indian waters.

(ii) Enforcement of Marine Fishing Regulation Acts and rules framed thereunder by the maritime States to regulate fishing operations, conservation measures etc. within their territorial waters.

(iii) Introduction of resource-specific fishing vessels for sustainable exploitation of marine fishery resources.

(iv) Regular survey, assessment and monitoring of marine fishery resources.

(v) Stock enhancement and conservation of resources through deployment of artificial reefs and fish aggregating devices.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, before I ask the supplementary, may I ask you to look at parts (a) and (b) of the question? In fact, the answer given is the logical end to my question. The answer is not to the main question asked. The hon. Minister has answered only to the logical end. Sir, you have to look at it. I want a categorical answer on that point, because there is a report of serious depletion of the whole fishing resources. Anyhow.

Sir, my question is while the deep-sea fishing policy was introduced, the ocean wealth in our area is 3.7 million tonnes and the exploitation went up to 2.9 million tonnes. According to a study made, only 1.6 lakh tonnes are available for commercial exploitation. Therefore, an agitation is going on. In this process the traditional fishermen are suffering. My question also points to the same thing. Foreign vessels, trawlers and collaborations are creating problems of over-exploitation. That is my point.

Sir, with your permission, I will quote only two sentences from the Supreme Court judgment delivered in 1993. It said: "Over the years, while the population of the traditional fishermen has increased by more than 20 to 28 per cent, the average production of each fisherman declined by more than half, which resulted in 98.5 per cent fishermen population descenting the poverty-line. While the traditional fishermen, who constitute 89 per cent of the total fishermen,

caught a negligible quantity of fish, the mechanised fishing operators, who are very small in number, have taken away the bulk catch i.e. 92 per cent. This is having a fatal effect upon the lives and economic conditions of the fishermen giving rise to several incidents of breach of law and order." Sir, this is the crux of my point. The point is that over-exploitation by a few trawlers is depleting the fishing wealth. Therefore, the agitation is going on.

Sir, there is a Murari Committee report. There is also a report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on over-exploitation by joint ventures and trawlers and others. In this background, I would like to know from the hon. Minister—the Prime Minister is also here—about the over-exploitation of the fisheries wealth.

Sir, Kerala is the only State which has implemented the regulations passed by Parliament banning fishing at the breeding time i.e. during the monsoon period. This is the most important period for preserving the fishing wealth. A lot of research institutions have also said the same thing about this. In this background I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he would look into the report of the Murari Committee, which was accepted by the Government in 1996 for implementation. I would also like to know whether he would also look into the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the foreign trawlers and joint venture operators. I would also like to know whether he will take the help of some institutions to find out the reasons for the depletion and to find out ways to preserve the marine wealth.

SHRI SOM PAL: Sir, the marine fish production has increased steadily from 16.58 lakh tonnes in 1987-88 to 29.6 lakh tonnes in 1996-97. It is only one per cent of the total catch. So, the apprehension that it is a depleting stock is not correct in the perception of the Government. So far as preservation of the stock is concerned, the Government have undertaken several schemes, including enforcement of Maritime Zones of India (Regulation of Fishing by Foreign Vessels) Act, 1981 and rules thereunder to check poaching and unauthorised fishing by foreign fishing vessels in Indian waters.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: I did not follow it. What is 1 per cent, Sir?

SHRI SOM PAL: Let me complete.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: You Said, "1 per cent." I did not understand it.

SHRI SOM PAL: It is 1 percent of the total catch by all means, by mechanised boats, by trawlers, by big vessels and also by fishermen in the territorial waters.

Second, enforcement of the Marine Fishing Regulation Acts and Rules thereunder by the maritime States to regulate fishing operations, conservation measures etc. within their territorial waters which is 12 miles from the coast, known as the "Coastal Zone 2".

Third, introduction of resource-specific fishing vessels for sustainable exploitation of marine fishery resources.

Fourth, regular survey, assessment and monitoring of marine fishery resources.

Fifth and the last, stock enhancement and conservation of resources through deployment of artificial reefs and fish aggregating devices and also stopping of fishing during the monsoon season when egg-laying takes place for recouping the stock.

So, this is what is being done by the Government...(*Interruptions*). . . .

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, he is only reading out the statement.

SHRI SOM PAL: The Murari Committee recommendations have already been gone into. The action-taken scheme has already been launched. Some action has already been taken.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: What action?

SHRI SOMPAL: I can give you the whole list. It runs into several pages.

Sir, if you want, I can read it out, the recommendations as well as the action taken thereon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Second supplementary.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, the hon. Minister says that 1 per cent of the total catch is 22.9 million. It is wrong. I disagree with him. I do not know who gave him the figure. You look into it. I believe that the total catch is 29 lakhs or 2.9 million. It is not 1 per cent. Is it 1 per cent of the total reserve? I do not know this. Sir, let him answer that point. I want this clarification on his reply to the first supplementry. What do you mean by "2.9 million is 1 per cent of the total catch in India?"

SHRI SOM PAL: What I mean is the catch by deep-sea-fishing vessels which, you are saying, are depleting the stock. They contribute only 1 per cent.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Do you say that they catch only 1 per cent? No.

SHRI SOMPAL: So far as the small fishermen are concerned, 12 nautical miles from the coast is reserved for them. Deep-sea-fishing vessels and trawlers are not allowed to come into this zone.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Let me correct you. It is not 1 per cent, but it is 4.5 per cent. Anyhow, forget about the dispute on that.

Sir, my second supplementary arising from this question is this. I quoted the judgement about the traditional fishermen. That is the basis of many policy statements made by the Government of India. That policy is being violated by joint ventures. An agitation is going on against that. The PM can look into the real problem of fishermen. A savings-cum-relief scheme for fishermen was introruduced. That is in practice since 1991. But, unfortunately, in 1994, a decision was taken at some level to exclude ladies from the benefit of this scheme. That is why, the national Forum for fishermen is going on a agitation all over India. They might have met the Government with a representation. In this background, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether he will look into the discrimination against women. In Kerala, about 50 per cent of the people involved in the fishing industry are women. They do peeling etc. They are involved in everything, So, in this background, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he will please look into the grievance of the fishermen that their women have been excluded from this scheme? Will he look into the memorandum which they have submitted to him?

SHRI SOM PAL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have received the memorandum. We have received not one but several memoranda. Recently, our Defence Minister, hon. Shri George Fernandes, has brought this to the notice of the hon. Prime Minister as well as the Agriculture Ministry. We have gone into the whole thing. It is correct that there is a scheme in Kerala where fishermen are asked to deposit some money for eight months. An equal amount is contributed by the State Government, and a equal amount by the Central Government also. During the bleak months of the monsoon season, the four months, this money is given back to those fishermen who will be out of job for four months. At some stage the Kerala Government took a unilateral decision to provide assistance to fisherwomen also. But the fact is that women hardly go for fishing. Their argument was....

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: You do not know about fishing industry.

SHRI SOM PAL: When the Central Government sought a clarification from the Kerala Government on this point, they have agreed that they have taken a unilateral decision. There is no discrimination because it was designed to benefit

the fishermen who would be going out for fishing. The Kerala Government has said that they have included the women who were selling fish. But they are selling fish even during the bleak period. They are getting fish from other sources like inland fisheries. So, they are not out of job.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Please don't mislead the House (*Interruptions*). . . Please don't mislead the House. We have come from the lower level. Please don't mislead the House.

SHRI SOM PAL: This scheme is available to the fishermen. It is still continuing.

SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Minister in his reply has stated that after the introduction of big vessels the fish production has increased. Actually, it is not a fact. This question is related to the livelihood of the fishermen community. After the introduction of big vessels, the Government has given a little more than 210 permits. Now, what is going on in the sea? What the owners of big vessels are doing is this : by using one permit, they are pressing 10 vessels into the sea for fishing. This is what is going on. There is no checking in the sea against the misuse of permits. I know that it is not easy. But the Government has to do something against the owners of big vessels. They are using one permit and bringing ten big vessels for fishing activities.

Secondly, during the breeding period—my hon. friend, Mr. Vayalar Ravi has also mentioned about it—there is a ban on fishing by big vessels and by mechanised boats. The Kerala Government has requested the Central Government to enforce the ban. The Kerala Government has already banned the mechanised boats from 15th June to 29th July. Now it is in force. In the previous years, the Central Government had banned fishing by mechanised boats during the breeding season. But this year this Government has not banned fishing by big vessels. It is adversely affecting the livelihood of lakhs of fishermen. I would like to know from the hon. Minister:

How is he going to check and ban the use of extra big vessels for fishing in the sea by the owners? Secondly, regarding fishermen what is he going to do? What is the reason for not banning fishing activities by big vessels during the breeding season, in this year, even after receiving a request from the Kerala Government? I want a categorical reply from the Minister.

SHRI SOMPAL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, since the inception of the scheme for giving licences to deep sea fishing vessels, the approvals accorded were 39 in one category and 37 in another category. Currently only 19 each in these two categories are operating. So far as surveillance is concerned, a check on poaching is being done by the Coast Guards, the State police and other agencies. So far as the enforcement of prohibition during the bleak period is concerned, this is being done by the Kerala Government very effectively. Other States are also responsible for doing that. This has to be done by them. If any logistic support or any other kind of support is required, we are ready to provide it.

SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: The Kerala Government has requested the Central government to impose a ban. But so far it has not been imposed. Why don't you impose a ban? We want to know the reason. If it is not imposed, it is going to adversely affect the livelihood of lakhs of fishermen. How will they eke out their livelihood?....(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: You should impose the ban immediately. Please reply to the question properly.

SHRI SOMPAL: Sir, after consulting the Ministry of Law and Justice, a ban has been imposed on the deep-sea fishing and this is being enforced by the Coast Guard and the Government. On the coast of Kerala, this is being enforced very effectively. I would again request....(*Interruptions*).

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: It is an Act of Parliament. The Government of India can impose a general ban. You have the right.

SHRI SOMPAL: It is being enforced. (*Interruptions*).

AN HON. MEMBER: Let the Prime Minister reply, Sir. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Are you going to assure us that you will ban it or not? That is the issue. (*Interruptions*).

DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: For your information, in the month of April, in Visakhapatnam, small boat owners and mechanised boat owners went on a strike. They blocked the Visakhapatnam port protesting against deep-sea vessels and trawlers fishing in the season of breeding. Is it in the notice of the Government of India? What steps are they taking?

SHRI JIBON ROY: Some assurance is required.

SHRI SOMPAL: Off the coast of Kerala, it has been imposed. So far as the other territories are concerned, I will find it out. Secondly,.... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: The assurance should be for the whole country...(*Interruptions*).

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Poor fishermen are affected....(*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down, all of you. Hon. Minister, my feeling is that the hon. Members are not satisfied that the ban is being properly imposed. I would request you to find out the information and have a half-an-hour discussion on this issue. Of course, they have to give notice for that.

Now, it has already taken so much of time. We will go to the next question. Question No. 423. Smt. Kamla Sinha.

Joint Statement Issued and Chinese Presidents

*423. SMT. KAMLA SINHA:†
PROF. A. LAKSHMISAGAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the recent joint statement of US and Chinese Presidents issued from Beijng after the summit meeting regarding their role in South Asia vis-a-vis India-Pakistan issues; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) The President of United States of America, William Jefferson Clinton visited China from June 25-July 3, 1998. During the visit, the US President and China's President issued a Joint Statement on South Asia on June 27, 1998.

The main elements of the Joint statement are:

—US and China would "continue to work closely together, with the P-5, Security Council and with others, to prevent an accelerating nuclear and missiles arms race in South Asia, strengthen international non-proliferation efforts, and promote reconciliation and the peaceful resolution of differences between India and Pakistan;

—The "recent nuclear tests by India and Pakistan and the resulting increase in tension between them, are a source of deep and lasting concern" to the two sides;

—They called "on India and Pakistan to stop all further nuclear tests and

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Smt. Kamla Sinha.